



Little Theatre News



Bournemouth (Issue #8)

Members' Edition

Friday, 17 July 1998

Happy New Season!

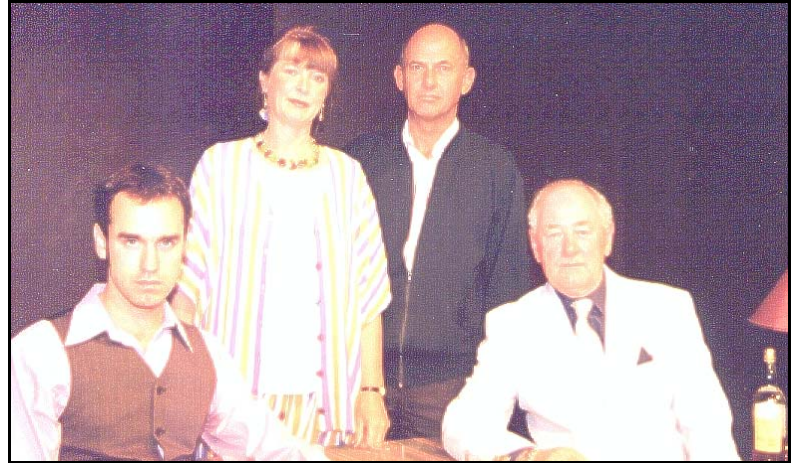
New Season: Sign on here

Lest we forget, the new season started on First July 1998, so you will find a wonderful special offer enclosed with this newsletter. It is a brand new membership renewal form. We have simplified it so you don't have to tell us in detail what functions you want to perform in the Club. After all, if you are getting this paper you are probably already a member. So just put your name (or names if a family) on the form, and send it back to the address stated, together with a cheque for your membership dues.

Each year, it seems, we have to beg you to send in your forms with the cash as soon as possible. The reason is twofold: we need the damned money, and we need *you*. After all, at the end of the day, we *are* you. That is what a membership club is all about.

In the last season, your money, and your talents gave us the best season we have had in years. Remember? Eight productions! Good houses! Critical acclaim! So pay up cheerfully, bearing in mind that, unlike inflation, the dues remain unaltered.

Over-page you will see the proposals we have for this new season's shows. And in case you think that everything is controlled by a small clique, please note we will have at least four new directors, one of whom, a Studio member, is also the author of his own production. They are Tim Garton, Don Gent,



The ultimate dysfunctional family portrait: from left, Lee Payton, Angela Whyatt, Andrew Whyatt and Derek Hyder in *The Collection*. Read the review (and other reviews) over-page. Read about their trip across 'The Pond' below.

America Revisited

After performing *The Collection* at Jameson Road, the same players, with tremendous back-up, left these shores on 22 June. They mounted a technical rehearsal, fraught with difficulties, in Benton Harbor, Michigan, on 23 June, and performed the show, under awful technical difficulties outside their control on 24 June. A full report of this production will appear in the August newsletter, with expletives deleted. In essence, the lighting plot was put on the host theatre's computer and then, before our little troupe could put on their play, a nasty Russian bunch of players *accidentally* wiped our lighting plot out of the system. (And they say the Cold War is over — Hah!). We had the choice either to perform under general lighting, which lost all the nuances which the clever lighting plot gave to the play, or to take a vacant slot to perform on another day. If we took that choice, we would have to wait for days then only have only one hour to re-program the lighting plot. We decided to go ahead with the show, right now!



Pinter hears Whyatt's report. His response: "No comment."

Well, the debate on that decision will run on. What cannot be denied is that the actors performed as excellently as they had previously done in Bournemouth, which is to say brilliantly. The actors were Derek Hyder, Lee Payton, Angela Whyatt and Andrew Whyatt. They were expertly, efficiently (and nobly) supported by a wonderful crew: Rachael de Courcy Beamish, Paul Caton, Ian Davies, Don Gent, Marcia Giles and James Westgate. They had to deal with the inconsistencies of Russians and Yanks, and they came through! They also paid their own air fares! We owe them all a debt of gratitude. Despite problems encountered en route, they made sure the name of BLTC was noted with approval. As a result, the 1999 Des Moines trip has been negotiated in principle, and California in 2000 beckons! More of this anon, as thespians say (allegedly).

Reviews

IN her review of *Grand National Night* in the Daily Echo, Linda Kirkman said:

"By rights this 'old fashioned thriller', premiered in 1945, should now be creaking — but far from it.

BLTC have excelled themselves in Hugh Norris's fine production, which comes over as fresh, alive and amusing, and it was a particular pleasure to be part of the capacity audience.

Alcoholic Babs Coates is murdered — or so we are led to believe — by her husband, Gerald, (a wonderfully cool and calm Mike Satchell) on one of the big nights of the racing calendar.

Whether or not he will get away with it provides the basis of this brilliantly-constructed play, with the tension maintained until the final moments when there is a totally unexpected 11th hour twist.

Claire Hiscock plays Babs as such a harridan that it seems a surprise no one has bumped her off sooner, and in total contrast she is also equally convincing as Babs' loud Liverpoolian sister, Pinkie Collins.

There are fine supporting performances from Noel Davenport and Rod Gilbert as Gerald's friend, Don Cherrett and Don Gent as the investigating officers and especially Philip Mutton as 'old retainer' Morton, but Denise Nippard's manner of speech as Joyce Penrose is not entirely convincing and detracts from an otherwise acceptable portrayal."

The week after the above show we put on the double bill of *The Donahue Sisters* and *The Collection* and Linda Kirkman duly wrote of them in the Echo:

"IN my pre-publicity, I persistently reversed the title of the first of these two plays, confusing it, I think, with one of the season's earlier successes — yet these three sisters bear no resemblance to their Rosensweig counterparts, although they could well be related to the Borgias.

Annie, Dunya and Rosie meet in the attic of their childhood home during their father's illness, but it seems they are not there just to reminisce and their child-like behaviour hides something far more sinister.

An incredible sense of foreboding is built up in Jack Snell's excellent production, and Rachael de Courcy Beamish, Amanda Garton and particularly Yvette Leahy play their characters to perfection.

In the second play, James (Andrew Whyatt) has been told by his wife Stella (Angela Whyatt) that during a dress collection showing in Leeds she was unfaithful with Bill (Lee Payton), who lives with Harry (Derek Hyder). Explanations are given on all sides and matters apparently resolved, but since this is a Pinter play much is left unsaid and the outcome remains unclear.

With absolutely faultless casting and superb direction from Andrew Whyatt, *The Collection* well deserves to represent England next week in the International Festival in Michigan, USA."



The Studio

Jack Snell says that just because Tim Garton has already cast the play he has authored, this does not mean that there is no work for any other Studio members. On the contrary, Jack will be available to conduct the Studio for all those who want to come on every Wednesday throughout the year. He says he will not be taking any holidays. So if you are a Studio devotee, or just a BLTC member who would like to take part in the fun, come along any Wednesday evening at 7.30 and join in! Of course this would not include most Wednesdays in any week immediately before a production, when our rehearsing show would be using the stage.

WELCOME TO HIZONNER!

(Review)

We all went to the Mayor-making show. The huge Tregonwell Hall was two-thirds full, a good house to see Keith Rawlings elected Mayor. Some of the script was a little ponderous, although the Councillor who proposed Our Boy thought himself a hell of a wag, making lots of nudge-nudge, wink-wink jokes at the new Mayor's expense. I felt sorry for the retiring Mayor, who didn't seem too sure of his lines, and I thought his comic timing was a little off. But no doubt who was the hit of the show: Keith gave a formal speech which could have come from the Queen at the opening of Parliament (you know — "My Government will conquer death and will build a new loo in the Park"). But he was also quite witty. Unfortunately, his humour was way out of the range of most of his listeners, many of whom looked as if they were sitting in God's waiting room. All the same, this is sound family comedy entertainment, with no bad language or nude scenes. Rather the opposite. I felt the new Mayor's costume was a *leetle* bit OTT. But (as the show's advertisements will no doubt quote me as saying from tomorrow) *I laughed!*

Leander Kirkham (Entertainment Editor)



Photo exclusive Tony Orman

BON VOYAGE!

Soon we shall be saying au revoir to Jan Fox. This talented lady, who has been a club member since 1992, playing leads in *Dial M For Murder*, *All My Sons* and *Time and the Conways*, has been accepted for a one-year post-graduate course at Birmingham School of Speech and Drama starting in September. Personally, I would not have thought that the winner of the Curtain Call Award for Best Actress as Mme de Merteuil in *Les Liaisons Dangereuses* would need the extra tuition. But Birmingham has a good track-record for helping its acting graduates to obtain work in the theatre, and that is Jan's aim in life. We all wish her the greatest good fortune. And Jan, do keep in touch!



Audition

'Ladies Who Lunch' 80th Anniversary production

Ian Davies will hold auditions for this British Telecom Biennial play on Friday 14 August from 7.30 pm. There are no less than **nine female** roles, and **four male** roles. Of these, three of the female roles are large, and three of the male roles are substantial. This play will be premiered nationally by hundreds of amateur groups in the week commencing Monday, 26 October, and should be the subject of much local interest and publicity. The play is described (currently!) as a 'criminal comedy'. Ian has met the author and the play has been under development and refinement up to the present. This is a most exciting project, and should particularly attract our female members. Also our 80th anniversary will receive sub-

NEW SEASON'S PROGRAMME

Fri. 14 August 1998. 7.30 p.m.
Readthrough and auditions for *Ladies Who Lunch* directed by Ian Davies.

Sat. 5 September. 7.30 for 8.00 p.m.
Annual General Meeting.

Fri. 18 September. 7.30 p.m.
Readthrough and auditions for *My Fat Friend* directed by Tony Orman.

Mon. 14 thru Sat. 19 September. Performances of *Nightmare: The Fright of Your Life* directed by Don Gent.

Fri. 25 September. 7.30 p.m.
Readthrough and auditions for *Two One-act plays* directed by Jack Snell.

Mon. 26 thru Sat. 31 October. Performances of *Ladies Who Lunch*.

Thurs. thru Sat. 5 – 7 November. Performances of *Soirée* written and directed by Tim Garton.

Mon. 7 thru Sat. 12 December. Performances of *My Fat Friend*.

Mon. 15 thru Sat. 21 February 1999. Performances of *Two one-act plays* (directed by Jack Snell).

Mon. 12 thru Sat. 17 April. Performances of *An Evening with Gary Lineker*. (Audition date to be announced).

Mon. 7 thru Sat. 13 June. Performances of play to be selected, which will then travel to Des Moines, Iowa, per-

STOP PRESS: The mention of loos in the 'Hizonner' article reminds us to mention the fact that the Committee intends, before the new season, to tear out the present ladies' and gentlemen's loos. They will be replaced by new ones, and there will be much re-decoration. This is not the glamorous side of the theatre. The installation will be carried out by professional plumbers, but the painting will be by volunteers. Are you going to be one of them?

A G M

Put 7.30 p.m., Saturday, 5 September in your diaries. We want as many as possible to attend. More next month.

Curtain Call Awards

These will be dished out on September 12 this year. If you want to nominate someone, or some show, check the Daily Echo for application forms. Remember, no nominations, no awards! But, of course, not all nominees reach the short-list.

